

AMERICAN MUSEUM NOVITATES

Number 869

Published by
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
New York City

July 2, 1936

NEW SUBSPECIES OF BIRDS FROM THE NEW GUINEA REGION

BY ERNST MAYR

In preparation of a list of the birds of New Guinea I have revised a number of the genera of New Guinea birds and examined some of the unidentified collections, acquired by the museum in recent years. I have found on this occasion that the following subspecies of New Guinea birds are apparently still undescribed.

Lalage karu tropriandi, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 223892, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Kiriwina Island, Trobriand Islands; November 6, 1928; H. Hamlin.

DIAGNOSIS.—Three males from the Trobriand Islands differ from nine males from the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago by larger size, by the reduction of the ochraceous wash on the under parts, and by the narrowness of the light edging of the rump feathers and upper tail-coverts. The barring of the under parts appears to be somewhat coarser and more conspicuous. The bill is heavier.

Four females from the Trobriand Islands differ from five females from the D'Entrecasteaux group (including the type of *obscurior*), by the same characters as the males. The reduction and paler coloration of the ochraceous wash on the under parts is particularly conspicuous. The upper parts are more grayish, less brownish than in *obscurior*.

L. k. pallescens from the Louisiades has the under parts much paler, and *L. k. polygrammica* from South New Guinea is rather gray on the under parts, with the ochraceous restricted to the middle of the belly and the under tail-coverts. The bars on the under parts appear to be less defined in this form, and more grayish, instead of blackish. The size is smaller.

WING

Trobriand Islands	3 ♂	99, 102, 105 (102.0)
	4 ♀	97, 98.5, 99, 102 (99.1)
D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago	9 ♂	95-101 (98.0)
	5 ♀	92-96 (94.4)

RANGE.—Kiriwina and Kaileuna, Trobriand Islands (November, 1928, Whitney South Sea Expedition, H. Hamlin coll.)

Eupetes leucostictus centralis, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 301927, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Weyland Mts. (1800 m.); September 17, 1931; Georg Stein.

DIAGNOSIS.—Differs from *E. l. mayri* Hartert from Wondiwoi, Wandammen, by the greater extent of bluish coloration on the middle of breast and belly, and in

the bluish green, not brownish olivaceous, tinge of throat, sides of the breast and flanks. The coloration of the upper parts and the size are the same in both forms.

		WING	TAIL
Wondiwoi (<i>mayri</i>)	4 ♂	79-82 (80.7)	83-88 (85.2)
	2 ♀	75.5, 77	80, 81
Weyland Mts. (<i>centralis</i>)	6 ♂	78-82 (79.7)	77-86 (80.6)
	3 ♀	76-78 (76.7)	78-83 (81.3)

RANGE.—Weyland Mts. and probably also Nassau and Oranje Range.

A single female from Mt. Goliath agrees well with the specimens of *centralis*, except for a slightly lighter hue of red on the upper parts. This difference, however, may have been caused by the foxing of the old specimen.

Pachycephala pectoralis fergussonis, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 330000, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Fergusson Island, D'Entre-casteaux Archipelago; January 19, 1929; Hannibal Hamlin.

DIAGNOSIS.—Similar to *P. p. spinicauda* Pucheran, but much larger; under parts bright orange-yellow, slightly richer than in two Cape York specimens, but not as deep yellow as a series from Merauke. The back is citrine, possibly a little more greenish, less golden than in Merauke birds, though there is some change (toward a more golden color) with wear. The tail is pure black with a narrow pale tip and practically no light margin on the outermost tail-feathers.

		WING	TAIL	CULMEN
Fergusson Island	2 ♂	94.5, 96	70.5, 74.5	20, 20
Hall Sound	1 ♂	91	69	21
	1 ♀	91	66.5	19.4
Merauke	5 ♂	85-89 (87.0)	64-68 (66.9)	19-20 (19.5)
	1 ♀	88	67	19.9
Cape York	2 ♂	86, 91	66, 67	19, 20.5

RANGE.—Only known from the type locality.

The nomenclature and taxonomy of the thickheads of south New Guinea is still rather obscure, but there is no question that the bird from Fergusson Island is distinctly larger. Specimens from Cape York are very similar to specimens from Merauke (South New Guinea), so similar in fact, that it is hardly possible to separate them. The following names have been given to specimens from this region: *spinicauda* Pucheran, 1853 (Warrior Island); *robusta* Master, 1876 (Cape York); and *queenslandica* Reichenow, 1899 (North Queensland). More material must be assembled before it can be decided how many of these forms are valid and what their distribution is.

This subspecies belongs to the black-tailed section of the species; it has nothing to do with either *collaris* Ramsay or *soror* Sclater. *P. p. collaris* was stated (in the original description) to have come from Coutance Island, off the coast of southeast New Guinea. Ramsay, himself, has later corrected this to Teste Island, Louisiade Archipelago. If any *Pachycephala* does occur on Coutance Island, we would expect a black-tailed form.

Manucodia comrii trobriandi, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 224342, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Kaileuna, Trobriand Islands; November 2, 1928; H. Hamlin.

DIAGNOSIS.—In coloration similar to *comrii*, but much smaller.

		WING	TAIL
<i>trobriandi</i> (Trobriand Islands)	12 ♂ ad.	219–231 (224.8)	150–167 (158.1)
	10 ♀ ad.	206–220 (211.3)	145–155 (148.7)
<i>comrii</i> (type)	(♂ ad.)	240	170
<i>comrii</i> (Fergusson Island)	11 ♂ ad.	237–254 (244.5)	168–182 (173.5)
	6 ♀ ad.	220–235 (226.0)	152–167 (160.5)

RANGE.—Kiriwina and Kaileuna Islands, Trobriand Islands.

The original description stated that the type of *comrii* was collected on the Huon Gulf. This is undoubtedly wrong since not *comrii*, but its representative, *chalybatus*, occurs on the mainland of New Guinea. The actual type-locality is the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, as I am kindly informed by Mr. Norman B. Kinnear (in litt.): "I do not think the bird could have come from the Trobriand Islands as H. M. S. Basilisk does not appear to have touched at these islands, but during the voyage when the bird was collected, the S. W. coast of Normanby Is., Fergusson Is., and Goodenough Is. were surveyed, also the coast of New Guinea from Milne Bay to the Huon Gulf."

The size of the type, which was kindly measured for me by Mr. Kinnear, confirms the conclusion that it came from the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago and that the Trobriand bird is to be described as new.

Astrapia splendidissima helios, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 448981, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Rothschild Collection); ♂ ad.; Mt. Goliath, Oranje range, Dutch New Guinea; January–February, 1911; A. S. Meek.

DIAGNOSIS.—Larger than *splendidissima*; throat more bluish green; crown, neck, and dorsal collar more bluish green, less golden green; throat collar more golden red. The spatula on the central tail-feathers is wider. Upper parts of females and young males more brownish, particularly on lower back and rump.

		WING	LONGEST TAIL-FEATHER	SHORTEST TAIL-FEATHER
<i>helios</i> Mt. Goliath				
3 ♂ ad.		137, 139, 139	234, 236, 236	70, 72, 81
4 ♂ imm.		132-140 (137.3)	215, 225	81-92 (85.8)
5 ♀		133-143 (136.8)	206-217 (210.2)	73-84 (79.0)
Type of <i>splendidissima</i>				
♂ ad.		133		64
Trade skins				
9 ♂ ad.		129-139 (133.8)	181-223 (197.2)	59-68 (63.7)
Weyland Mts.				
5 ♂ ad.		130-134 (132.2)	193, 200, 200	60-68 (63.8)
5 ♂ imm.		133-139 (135.8)	204, 228	78-90 (85.5)
6 ♀		129-133 (130.7)	193-207 (198.2)	69-79 (73.2)

RANGE.—Mt. Goliath, Oranje Range.

The type of *Astrapia splendidissima* Rothschild was said to have come "probably from the Charles Louis Mts." It was collected in the same period in which were discovered *Pteridophora alberti*, *Parotia carolae*, *Amblyornis macgregoriae mayri*, *Loboparadisea sericea*, and other birds of paradise. All these were trade skins supposed to have come from various localities such as Geelvink Bay, Jobi Island, Mamberano River, etc., but it has since become quite certain that all these birds actually came from the Weyland Mts., where the Jabi people are great bird hunters. The type of *splendidissima* and all the other trade skins that I had the opportunity to examine agree perfectly with the fine series recently collected by Shaw Mayer in the Weyland Mts. The differences between *splendidissima* and Mt. Goliath birds are thus not a matter of preparation of the skins, as believed by Rothschild and Hartert (1913, Nov. Zool., XX, p. 521), but are due to geographical variation. Birds from the Utakwa River are probably intermediate, but according to Olgilvie-Grant, they agree in coloration with Mt. Goliath skins (Ibis, Jubilee Suppl., II, 1915).

Ailuroedus crassirostris facialis, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 448982, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Rothschild Collection); ♂ ad.; Snow Mts. (Utakwa River), Dutch New Guinea; Sept. 24, 1910; Albert Meek.

DIAGNOSIS.—Similar to *A. c. melanocephalus* Ramsay, but spots on crown much more numerous and averaging darker; spots on crown and nape darker ochraceous; nape and superciliary region always somewhat spotted; upper back with very large rounded or oval, deep ochraceous spots; lores and anterior forehead buffy or pale ochraceous with only little admixture of blackish; chin and upper throat whitish; blackish edges of feathers on throat very narrow; breast feathers with blackish edges, frequently mixed with a considerable amount of green, not as black as in *melanocephalus*; breast and belly washed with a dull ochraceous; axillaries and under wing-coverts whitish, not gray as in *melanocephalus*.

A. c. melanotis differs by having pale ochraceous spots on crown and upper back, by having chin and upper throat still lighter than *facialis*, by having the black edges of the breast feathers inconspicuous and much mixed with greenish, and by having the rest of the under parts lighter with very little ochraceous.

		WING	TAIL
<i>melanocephalus</i>	14 ♂	148-161 (155.9)	118-128 (124.0)
	11 ♀	144-156 (149.0)	110-119 (114.6)
<i>facialis</i>	2 ♂	153, 160 (156.5)	113, 116 (114.5)
	4 ♀	147-161 (153.8)	104-113 (108.2)

RANGE.—Nassau Range, Dutch New Guinea.

Climacteris placens steini, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 302465, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Mt. Sumuri, Weyland Mountains; August 28, 1931; G. Stein.

DIAGNOSIS.—Differs from *Climacteris placens meridionalis* by having the upper back a dark gray, only slightly washed with olive brown. The brown spots on the feathers of the crown are more extensive but less sharply defined. On the under parts the whitish upper throat is more conspicuous, and the rest of the under parts are more grayish, less brownish. The second primary has no light spot, and the spot on the third primary is smaller than in the Southeast New Guinea bird. The central tail-feathers are marked with a blackish subterminal spot and the light tips of the lateral tail-feathers are shorter. The female of *steini* differs from that of *meridionalis* by the same characters as the males.

	WING	TAIL	CULMEN
2 ♂	83.5, 84	63, 65	16, 16
1 ♀	87	69	16

RANGE.—Weyland Mts. (1500 to 2300 m.)

MATERIAL EXAMINED.—*Climacteris placens placens*: 1 ♂, 1 ♀ (Arfak Mts.). *Climacteris placens steini*: 2 ♂, 1 ♀ (Weyland Mts.). *Climacteris placens "stevensi"* (= *meridionalis*): 6 ♀ (Mt. Misim). *Climacteris placens meridionalis*: 5 ♂, 5 ♀ (Mts. southeastern N. Guinea).

I am much obliged to Mr. James Greenway and the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy for the loan of the typical series of *Climacteris placens stevensi*, but with my much larger material I am unable to confirm the validity of this subspecies.

Cinnyris sericea vicina, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 448980, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Rothschild Collection); ♀ ad.; Simbang (Huon Gulf), Mand. Terr. of New Guinea; August 21, 1899; E. Nyman.

DIAGNOSIS.—Similar to *christianae*; immature males and females, however, have the back dull grayish green, instead of bright citrine. The abdomen is a pale

grayish yellow instead of a bright sulphur yellow. Birds from the Trobriand Islands, from the D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago, and from the Marshall Bennett group are somewhat intermediate in size and coloration, but much closer to *christianae*, particularly in coloration. Birds from the D'Entrecasteaux Islands have particularly long bills.

	MALES		FEMALES	
	WING	CULMEN	WING	CULMEN
<i>christianae</i>				
Sudest	(8) 65-70 (67.1)	18-19 (18.2)	(3) 59-60 (58.8)	17.3-17.7 (17.5)
St. Aig-				
nan	(10) 66-68 (66.8)	17.8-19.0 (18.5)	(4) 59-63 (60.6)	17.2-18.1
Woodlark	(18) 64-67 (65.3)	17.3-19.2 (18.4)		
Marshall				
Bennett	(5) 63.5-66.5 (64.5)	17.2-18.2 (17.6)		
Trobriand	(6) 65-66 (65.7)	17.6-18.7 (18.1)		
G o o d -				
enough				
and Fer-				
gusson				
Is.	(12) 62-66 (63.8)	17.7-20.1 (18.8)		
<i>vicina</i>				
Simbang	(7) 61-65 (63.0)	17.8-18.7 (18.1)	(4) 53-57 (55.7)	16.3-16.8 (16.7)
Kumusi	(2) 64.5, 66	17.4-18.4 (17.9)		
Doini	(3) 61-63 (62.0)	17.7, 18.9		

RANGE.—Doini Island and north coast of southeastern New Guinea between Collingwood Bay and Huon Gulf (Finschhafen).

A single female from Doini Island near Samarai (Zimmer Coll.) is in damaged condition, but seems to belong to *vicina*, as is indicated by the measurements of the males.

Dicaeum geelvinkianum violaceum, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 450786, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Rothschild Collection); ♂ ad.; Goodenough Island; April 14, 1913; Albert Meek.

DIAGNOSIS.—Similar to *rubrocoronatum*, but upper parts duller, less glossy; gloss purplish violet, not steel blue; red of crown, rump and breast spot averaging darker; under parts more washed with gray, abdomen not yellowish green, but grayish olive, size as in *rubrocoronatum*.

RANGE.—D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago (Fergusson, Goodenough, and Dobu Islands).

Birds from the Astrolabe Bay agree in coloration well with specimens from the south coast. A series from the Kumusi River shows a rather purplish gloss of the upper parts and tends to *violaceum*; it seems best, however, to include birds from the north coast of southeast New

Guinea in *rubrocoronatum* and not in the new race. Birds from Dampier and Vulcan Island also belong to *rubrocoronatum*; they average, however, a little less glossy on the upper parts and a little more grayish underneath.

Melidectes torquatus nuchalis, new subspecies

TYPE.—No. 302526, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Weyland Mountains (1500 m.); October 10, 1931; Georg Stein.

DIAGNOSIS.—Intermediate between *M. t. torquatus* and *cahni*; differs from *torquatus* by having the breast more washed with tawny, the blackish spots on the sides of the belly more conspicuous and the white spot on the throat averaging smaller. The upper parts are darker; the nape is sooty brown, not hair-brown; general coloration of back more blackish, less grayish; white of edges of feathers of back narrower and less conspicuous; superciliary line rufous, not ochraceous tawny. Differs from *cahni* by the much paler tawny under parts and by the absence of a throat wattle. Size as in *torquatus* and *cahni*, not large as *polyphonus*. Wing: ♂, 115 mm.; ♀, 106, 107, 111; tail: ♂, 98; ♀, 92, 92, 98.

RANGE.—Weyland Mountains, and probably Nassau Mts. and mountains on upper Mamberano.

This race has been identified as *M. t. torquatus* by Ogilvie-Grant (1915, Ibis, Suppl., p. 59) and Hartert (1932, Nova Guinea, XV, (Zool.), p. 475), and as *M. t. cahni* by Stresemann and Paludan in their report on Stein's Weyland Mts. collection.

